



Rhode Island Department of Health

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RIDOH Announces Second Presumptive Positive COVID-19 Case; Testing a Third Individual

All three individuals from the same European trip;

Two Schools in Rhode Island Temporarily Closed

The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH)'s State Health Laboratories have identified a second presumptive positive case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), and a separate person has been tested for COVID-19 today. The presumptive positive case is a teenager. She is at home with mild symptoms. The adult being tested is in her 30s and is also at home with mild symptoms.

These two individuals went on the same trip to Europe in mid-February as the male in his 40s who RIDOH announced this morning as Rhode Island's first presumptive positive case of COVID-19. Saint Raphael Academy, which organized the trip to Europe in mid-February, will be closed for the remainder of this week. The adult whose test results are still pending is a staff member at Achievement First Academy in Providence. Achievement First Academy will be closed for two days, pending the results of the staff member's tests. (The result is expected tomorrow, and the school is closing for an additional day to do environmental cleaning.)

Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH, the Director of Health, will be available to answer questions about these developments on a media call tomorrow. This call is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. on Monday, March 2, 2020. The call-in information for this call is (646) 876-9923; password #569 544 872.

All 38 of the people who went on this trip will be self-monitoring for symptoms at home for 14 days with public health supervision. They have been instructed to not go to school or work and to remain at home for these 14 days.

"All three people went on the same trip to Italy," said Dr. Alexander-Scott. "This is precisely why we are being so aggressive in identifying contacts, ensuring monitoring, and testing people who are symptomatic."

Outreach to the people who were in direct contact with any of these three individuals is on going. These direct contacts will be self-monitoring for symptoms at home for 14 days with public health supervision. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is managing contact tracing for people on the return flight that these three individuals took back to the United States.

Because human coronaviruses most commonly spread through respiratory droplets, Rhode Islanders are reminded to take the same measures that healthcare providers recommend annually to prevent the spread of the flu and other viruses.

- Get your flu shot, and make sure the people around you do the same.
- Wash your hands often throughout the day. Use warm water and soap. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand gel.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow. Viruses can spread by coughing or sneezing on other people or into your hands.
- Stay home from work or school if you are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious foods.
- Keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant.

The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it. A facemask should be used by people who have COVID-19 and are showing symptoms. This is to protect others from the risk of getting infected.

If you have recently traveled from an area with [widespread or ongoing community spread](#) of COVID-19 and you have symptoms of the disease (fever, cough, shortness of breath) reach out to your healthcare provider and call ahead before going to a healthcare facility. The healthcare provider or facility will work closely with RIDOH.

There have been more than 60 US cases of COVID-19 confirmed. Globally, more than 80,000 cases have been confirmed. CDC reported the first US fatality on February 29th.

RIDOH is coordinating with other State agencies and community organizations to support anyone doing self-quarantining to ensure that people who are remaining at home have the support services they need. This includes support with everyday needs, such as prescriptions and groceries. The organizations that have offered support include agencies throughout the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), the Rhode Island Food Bank, the American Red Cross, and other members of Rhode Island's Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD).

The additional preparedness steps that RIDOH has taken include:

- Establishing an Incident Command System response, which is how RIDOH and other State agencies organize to prepare for (or respond to) an urgent situation that requires extensive coordination. It includes staff from the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA), the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH), the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS), the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM), the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), and Rhode Island Commerce. It also includes staff from RIDOH's State Health Laboratories, Center for Acute Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Center for Emergency Preparedness and Response, and Center for Public Health Communication, among other areas of RIDOH.
- Regularly communicating with RIDOH's Infectious Disease Epidemiology Advisory Committee (IDEAC) to track any clinical and epidemiological developments related to COVID-19. (IDEAC is a group of infectious disease physicians throughout Rhode Island that provides guidance to RIDOH leadership on emerging infectious disease matters.)
- Maintaining a robust system to receive and follow up on illness reports from Rhode Island healthcare providers.
- Regularly sending to local healthcare providers summaries of the national situation, criteria to guide evaluation of patients, and guidance on specimen collection, testing, and reporting.
- Coordinating closely with healthcare facilities and emergency medical services (EMS) providers to ensure their preparedness.
- Communicating regularly to community partners, such as schools, faith leaders, and municipal officials.

More information about COVID-19 is available in multiple languages at health.ri.gov/covid. People with questions about COVID-19 can call 401-222-8022.